

## Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7271

INFO AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 13660

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, VT, CZ

SUBJECT: LATEST VATICAN-CZECH TALKS

1. ACCORDING TO VATICAN SOURCES, SEPT 16-20 VISIT TO ROME OF GOC RELIGIONS OFFICIALS LED BY KAREL HRUZA, PERMITTED VATICAN TO DISCUSS MAJOR OUTSTANDING CHURCH-STATE PROBLEMS BUT NO HEADWAY WHATSOEVER WAS MADE AND ATMOSPHERE WAS GENERALLY COOL. ARCHBISHOP CASAROLI, VATICAN "FONMIN", REMARKED TO US DURING TALKS THAT VISITORS "WERE MAKING HIS LIFE IMPOSSIBLE" AND THAT, GIVEN THEIR DEEP SUSPICION AND DISTRUST OF CHURCH, HE WONDERED WHY THEY BOTHERED TO COME. IN RESPONSE TO OUR QUERIES, VATICAN SOURCES SEEM AGREED THAT GENERAL ATMOSPHERE OF DETENTE RATHER THAN ANY DESIRE TO MAKE ACCOMMODATION WITH CHURCH IS MAIN REASON BEHIND GOC DECISION TO REOPEN ITS DIALOGUE WITH VATICAN. SOURCES BELIEVE GOC VIEWS VATICAN AS JUST ANOTHER WESTERN CAPITAL TO WHICH A BRIDGE COULD PROFITABLY BE BUILT PROVIDED PRICE IS NOT TOO HIGH.

2. GENERAL PROBLEM OF NAMING BISHOPS TO VACANT DIOCESES WAS DISCUSSED AND VATICAN PRESENTED HRUZA DELEGATION WITH NAMES OF THREE CANDIDATES THEY WOULD LIKE TO PLACE, ONE EACH IN MORAVIA, BOHEMIA AND SLOVAKIA. SOURCE DID NOT SPECIFY WHICH DIOCESES INVOLVED, BUT SAID THEY ALL WERE PRESENTLY IN HANDS OF VICARS RATHER THAN APOSTOLIC ADMINISTRATORS, A SITUATION CHURCH WOULD  
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LIKE TO REMEDY AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. LITOMERICE WAS NOT DISCUSSED,

HOWEVER, AS IT HAS ONLY BEEN VACANT SINCE CARDINAL TROCHTA'S DEATH IN APRIL, A SHORT TIME IN COMPARISON TO OTHER VACANT DIOCESES. HRUZA SAID HE WOULD PRESENT NAMES FOR CONSIDERATION IN PRAGUE.

3. PERENNIAL PROBLEM OF ACCESS TO SEMINARIES WAS DISCUSSED. ALTHOUGH GOVERNMENT DOES NOT ADHERE TO POLICY OF "NUMBERS CLAUSUS," SOURCE SAID, IN EFFECT, RESULT SAME SINCE GOVERNMENT MUST APPROVE ALL APPLICANTS. RECENTLY A CERTAIN NUMBER OF ARCHITECTS, ENGINEERS AND DOCTORS WERE DENIED PERMISSION TO STUDY FOR PRIESTHOOD ON GROUNDS THAT SOCIETY NEEDED THEM TO PRACTICE IN FIELDS THEY HAD ALREADY ACQUIRED.

4. DURING TALKS, ACCORDING TO ONCE SOURCE, VATICAN ALSO NOTED THAT DISSOLUTION OF RELIGIOUS ORDERS IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA HAD BEEN DONE IN VIOLATION OF CZECH CONSTITUTION. HRUZA MADE NO COMMENT.

5. IF ALL GOES WELL, VATICAN DELEGATION PLANNING TO VISIT PRAGUE LATER THIS YEAR. BEAUDRY

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